

Purpose Having observed that patients who experience myocardial infarction often present with unexplained tiredness for some time prior, developers of the questionnaire hoped to create a tool that could be used to assess these feelings of “vital exhaustion” [1]. The scale consisting of 21 items honed from an original pool of 58 and chosen for their capacity to predict future coronary events. There is also a 37 item version shown on the following page. The asterisked items are all included in the 21 item scale as are a further six items which are listed on the following page. Sleep physicians may be particularly interested in incorporating the scale into their practice due to the strong association between sleep disordered breathing and cardiac problems [2].

Population for Testing The MQ was initially developed through a survey that was answered by 3,877 male civil servants [1]. Its predictive capability has since been assessed in women as well [3].

Administration The Maastricht Questionnaire is a short, paper-and-pencil measure requiring between 5 and 10 min for completion.

Reliability and Validity In an initial validation, the questionnaire was found to possess an internal

consistency of .89. Further assessment of the scale confirmed that “vital exhaustion” is significantly associated with future angina and future myocardial infarction [4].

Obtaining a Copy A copy of the scale can be found in the original article by the developers [1].

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Scoring Patients are asked a number of questions which they can answer with “yes,” “no,” or “?” (e.g., “Do you often feel tired?”). Responses of “yes” are scored as 2, “?” is given 1 point, and “no” receives 0. For items 9 and 14, this scoring system is reversed. A total score can then be calculated by summing each item. Developers defined “vital exhaustion” as scores that fell above the median of the MQ.

Maastricht Vital Exhaustion Questionnaire

- *1. Do you often feel tired?
- *2. Do you often have difficulty falling asleep?
- *3. Do you wake up repeatedly during the night?
- 4. Have you felt less confident lately?
- 5. Do you sometimes have a feeling that you have got problems you cannot work out, in recent months?
- *6. Do you feel weak all over?
- 7. Have you been unable to stand loud noises lately?
- *8. Do you have a feeling that you haven't been accomplishing much lately?
- *9. Do you have the feeling that you can't cope with everyday problems as well as you used to?
- 10. Do you have a feeling that the future is becoming less and less certain?
- 11. Have you thought about deceased acquaintances or relatives more often lately?
- *12. Do you believe that you have come to a "dead end"?
- 13. Are you continuously worrying about your health?
- 14. Have demands been made on you lately that you could not cope with?
- 15. Do minor hassles easily irritate you in recent months?
- *16. Do you feel more listless recently than before?
- 17. Do you feel as if you are losing your self-control?
- 18. Do you have a feeling that nobody can help you with those problems deep down inside?
- 19. Have demands been made on you lately that you could only meet by making extra efforts?
- *20. I enjoy sex as much as ever. (no)
- *21. Have you experienced a feeling of hopelessness recently?
- 22. Do you often worry about your health?
- 23. Do you sometimes wonder whether you will still be alive tomorrow?
- 24. Does the feeling that you are a failure ever come upon you?
- *25. Do little things irritate you more lately than they used to do?
- *26. Do you feel you want to give up trying?
- 27. Are you becoming less satisfied with yourself?
- 28. Have you lately had a feeling, like "I do not achieve enough, I could achieve more if only I were healthier, not so weak, not so limp"?
- 29. Do you feel downcast?
- *30. Do you sometimes feel that your body is like a battery that is losing its power?
- 31. Do you sometimes have a feeling that you don't know exactly where you stand?
- 32. Do you feel less capable of doing something useful nowadays.
- 33. Do you have a feeling that your family doesn't understand you too well?
- *34. Would you want to be dead at times?
- 35. Have you felt strange bodily sensation lately?
- *36. Do you have the feeling that you don't have what it takes anymore these days?
- 37. Can you bring yourself less and less to leave the house and go somewhere for a visit?

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Further items making up the 21 item Maastricht scale are:

- (a) Does it take more time to grasp a difficult problem than it did a year ago?
- (b) I feel fine
- (c) Do you feel dejected?
- (d) Do you feel like crying sometimes?
- (e) Do you ever wake up with a feeling of exhaustion and fatigue?
- (f) Do you have increasing difficulty on concentrating on a single subject for long?

References

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Representative Studies Using Scale

- Hayakawa, T., Fujita, O., Ishida, K., Usami, T., Sugiura, S. Kayukawa, Y., Terashima, M., Ohta, T., & Okada, T. (2002). Evaluating mental fatigue in patients with obstructive sleep apnea syndrome by the Maastricht Questionnaire. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 56(3), 313–314.
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